

Trip Report
Managua, Nicaragua
March 16-18, 2010

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Forest Health Protection

This trip was a continuation of the trip reported on by Steve Clarke. The purpose of this trip was to provide training in bark beetle identification to foresters or identification experts in Nicaragua and other Central American countries.

This course was co-taught with Dr. Thomas Atkinson an expert in Central American bark beetle taxonomy and fluent in Spanish.

I arrived in Managua on Monday, March 15, 2010, and was met at the airport by Alberto Sediles, our host for the week. Alberto took me to the hotel recommended by the US Embassy in Nicaragua, the Camino Real in Managua. I met Steve Clarke, Roger Menard and Ron Billings at the hotel as they were supporting the local economy and sampling the local beverage called Toña. Steve and Roger recounted their experience at the Tip Top. I greatly appreciated their advice and decided to not repeat their experience with a chicken lunch.

The training began on Tuesday, March 16 at the Universidad Nacional Agraria (UNA). Our host Alberto, a forest entomology professor with the Universidad, picked us up and took us directly to the lab where we were to conduct the training. There were approximately 15 attendees for the class on beetle identification. Many of the participants were from various agencies in Nicaragua (UNA, INAFOR, MAGFOR and Museo Entomologico Leon), as well as from Panama, Cuba, and Honduras. We provided the attendees with a CD of our presentations as well as a small box of bark beetles from Central America that they were able to keep as reference specimens.

We began our presentations with Tom discussing the biology and key identification characteristics of some of the important Central American bark beetle groups. The students were asked to bring with them some of their own specimens of bark beetles for identification. Steve Clarke then offered that we could use some of the beetles in his pillow cases, which at first had

me a concerned, but then he informed me that they were in fact bark beetles he collected the previous week. We then worked with the attendees to help point out characters useful in identification and how to navigate through the bark beetle keys.

We continued with a mix of presentations and instructions at the microscopes on Tuesday and Wednesday. Tom's fluency in Spanish was a big help in communicating with the attendees.

Unfortunately, on Wednesday night I received a call from home informing me of a family emergency, so I had to depart on Thursday morning before the end of the class. Tom continued to conduct the class on Thursday, and I am most appreciative of his expertise and willingness to help with the class.



Tom Atkinson (far right) presenting at the bark beetle identification class, Nicaragua